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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GHANA'S DEFENSE MINISTER SEES MILITARY AS
DEVELOPMENT ARM

Classified By: PolChief Scott Ticknor for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) Summary: In the Ambassador's first official call on Minister of Defense Kwame Addo-Kufuor on November 7, the minister announced his vision to transform Ghana's military into a "development partner" of the Government of Ghana. A presidential hopeful, the minister used the meeting largely as a media event. End summary.

2. (U) Addo-Kufuor thanked the U.S. government for its support for Ghana's military through the West African Training Cruise and other training. The minister told the Ambassador that in the medium- to long-term greater peace in the West African sub-region will enable Ghana's military to turn its attention to the country's development. Addo-Kufuor identified four key areas he expected the military to address: deforestation caused by the expansion of the Sahara desert; road construction; bridge construction; and the provision of low-cost housing. He said he intended to obtain an Ultimate Building Machine from M.I.C. Industries of Reston, VA. The Minister said this machine, a mobile unit that can build structures out of metal, would be used to build low-cost housing as well as warehouses and airport hangars.

3. (C) Comment: Addo-Kufuor unexpectedly broke off this courtesy call after only a few minutes of remarks in front of roughly 20 print and broadcast journalists. The President's brother and a presidential hopeful, he clearly used the meeting to boost publicity for himself. His announced development plans have not gone down well with some of the senior military and will be very unpopular with the rank and file if Ghana discontinues its participation in peacekeeping operations that are financially lucrative to Ghana's soldiers.

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